

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04305 301049Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 SAA-01 SSM-03 AF-10
ARA-10 EA-10 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01
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O P 300850Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8970
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4305

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE30
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: JULY 30, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4301 (DTG 290950Z JUL 78)

1. SUMMARY. SYRIANS SHELLED AYN AR-RUMMANAH FOR THE SECOND NIGHT IN A ROW AND CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN FIRED ON A SYRIAN ROADBLOCK IN ASHRAFIYAH, BUT RELATIVE CALM PREVAILS AS OF
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04305 301049Z

1200 HOURS JULY 30. THERE WAS MORE CRITICISM OF THE EMBASSY'S ADVICE TO AMERICAN CITIZENS TO LEAVE LEBANON IF THEY DID NOT HAVE PRESSING BUSINESS. ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT LE JOUR A BATTALION OF LEBANESE TROOPS ARRIVED IN JAZZIN IN PREPARATION FOR FURTHER DEPLOYMENT SOUTH. END SUMMARY.

2. RENEWED FIGHTING.

A. FIGHTING BROKE OUT AGAIN THE NIGHT OF JULY 29-30. FOR THE SECOND NIGHT IN A ROW SYRIAN FORCES SHELLED THE AYN AR-RUMMANAH AREA. THE FIGHTING STARTED ABOUT 2000 HOURS JULY 29 AND DIED DOWN AROUND 0100 HOURS LOCAL JULY 30. THE SITUATION IS RELATIVELY CALM AS OF 1200 HOURS, JULY 30.

B. A COMMUNIQUE OF THE "UNIFIED COMMAND" OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS ACCUSED THE SYRIAN FORCES OF OPENING FIRE WITHOUT ANY PROVOCATION AND SAID THERE HAD BEEN 11 PEOPLE WOUNDED. THE COMMUNIQUE ADDED THAT THE COMMAND HAD ISSUED "AN EXPLICIT ORDER TO REFRAIN FROM ANY RETALIATION IN CONFORMITY WITH THE OVERALL STRATEGY IN EFFECT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CRISIS." (COMMENT: CHRISTIAN LEADERS HAVE AT BEST IMPERFECT CONTROL OVER THEIR MILITIAS. WHATEVER ORDERS MAY HAVE BEEN ISSUED, SNIPING AT SYRIAN TROOPS CONTINUES. END COMMENT.)

C. DURING THE DAY OF JULY 29, THERE WERE ALSO CLASHES IN THE EAST BEIRUT NEIGHBORHOOD OF ASHRAFIYAH. THE FIGHTING BEGAN WHEN THE SYRIANS SET UP A ROADBLOCK IN SASSINE CIRCLE IN THE HEART OF ASHRAFIYAH, "DESPITE AN AGREEMENT THAT LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WOULD MAN ALL ROADBLOCKS" IN CHRISTIAN EAST BEIRUT, L'ORIENT-LE JOUR QUOTED A PHALANGE SOURCE AS SAYING. MILITIAMEN OPENED FIRE ON THE ROADBLOCK AROUND 1900 HOURS, AND FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD AFTERWARDS, ACCORDING TO IKE. IN THE EVENING, HOWEVER, LEBANESE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04305 301049Z

POLICEMEN TOOK OVER CONTROL OF THE ROADBLOCK AND THE FIGHTING STOPPED, THE PAPER SAID. AT ABOUT 1030 HOURS ON JULY 30, SNIPERS KILLED TWO PEOPLE WHO TRIED TO CROSS FROM WEST TO EAST BEIRUT AT THE MUSEUM CROSSING, ACCORDING TO AN EMBASSY SOURCE.

3. MORE CRITICISM OF US TRAVEL ADVISORY.

A. THERE WAS AGAIN CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY'S TRAVEL ADVISORY TO AMERICAN CITIZENS. PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS TOLD REPORTERS IT WAS "TRULY REGRETTABLE" THAT THE AMERICAN AND CANADIAN EMBASSIES HAD ADVISED THEIR CITIZENS TO LEAVE LEBANON.

B. GREEK ORTHODOX DEPUTY MUNIR ABU FADIL (ALEY) SAID THE ADVICE WAS "REALLY UNFORTUNATE AT THE PRESENT TIME, SINCE THE STATE OF SECURITY IS CONSTANTLY IMPROVING." SHIA DEPUTY ABD AL-LATIF ZAYN (NABATIYAH) SAID "OUR CRITICISM WITH REGARD TO THE AMERICAN DECISION TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT OF US GUARANTEES (SIC) GIVEN TO PRESIDENT SARKIS SO THAT HE CAN OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES AND REESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE THROUGHOUT ALL LEBANON'S TERRITORY."

4. ARMY TO THE SOUTH.

A. ARMY COMMANDER KHOURY HAS TOLD PRESIDENT SARKIS THAT LEBANESE ARMY UNITS WOULD DEPLOY TO SOUTH LEBANON BEGINNING AT DAWN JULY 31, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. THE PAPER SAID THAT HALF OF THE TROOPS WOULD COME FROM ABLAH AND RAYAK IN THE BEQAA AND HALF FROM UNITS AT YARZE AND THE CHRISTIAN BARRACKS IN SARBA. (COMMENT: SYRIANS HAVE STRONGLY ENDORSED USE OF UNITS FROM BEQAA TO GO SOUTH. THE PRESENCE OF TROOPS FROM SARBA WOULD PROBABLY GENERATE CRITICISM BY LEBANESE MUSLIMS. END COMMENT.)

B. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR REPORTED THAT SA'AD HADDAD AND SAMI
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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 04305 301049Z

SHIDIAC WOULD BE RECALLED TO THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AT YARZE, WHERE THEY WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO NEW POSTS. LOCAL BA'TH PARTY HEAD ASSIM QANSUH, HOWEVER, TOLD EMBOFF ON JULY 29 THAT HADDAD AND SHIDIAC HAD ALREADY SAID THEY WOULD REFUSE TO LEAVE THE SOUTH. PARKER

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